

Position Paper on Reduction of General Education Credit Hours

Plan for GE Reduction (Table 1)

1. Eliminate the CLS hours (3 credit hours) and retain the Information Literacy credit (1 credit hour).
2. Reduce each content area (LS/PS, HU/CA, SS) by 3 credit hours for a total of 9 credit hours.
3. Require students to take a 3 hour course (exploratory course) in any of the 3 areas.

Board of Regents Policy for Gen Ed: 30-39 credit hours

Board of Regents and NW Accreditation Policy for BS/BA credit hours – 120 (126 max)

Reasons for a Reduction In Gen Ed Credit Hours (6 Hour Reduction in Content Areas)

Opportunities for University and Enhancements for Students

1. Full time faculty reassignment - Enhance opportunities for full-time tenure track faculty to teach upper division courses by reducing their general education courses; allow more faculty-mentored student research (single most influential/beneficial learning opportunity for students) by the GE course reduction, allow development of high impact upper division courses to entice and retain students.
2. Enhance Associate/Bachelors Degrees by providing more flexibility in course offerings and utilize the newly available credit hours for course development to enhance student learning in specific content areas. This could provide greater flexibility to rapidly designing and implementing courses and new technologies appear such as in manufacturing technology.
3. Decrease the 126 plus hours found in many degree programs (even with streamlined programs and advising), reduce the “hidden prerequisites”
Need list of degrees that are over the 120 hours or over the 62 hours for a major especially with degrees that require accreditation or licensure (such as CHP, EAST, Business, etc.)
4. Expand Performance Funding at WSU for the legislative matrix measuring 6-year graduation rate. This could reduce by nearly one semester the time to graduation. This could have a significant impact on performance based funding from the State Legislature.
5. Increase the available hours of specific content for Associate Degrees. This allows the replacement of 9 hours of Gen Ed with 9 hours of course content specific to that associate degree. This could allow Associate Degrees to address employment opportunities especially in STEM and could make associate degrees more interesting in specific disciplines allowing greater recruitment into those bachelor degree programs.

6. Reduce the overall number of SCHs taught by adjunct faculty (Table 2), reduce the dependency of some departments on adjunct faculty, and allow more selective recruitment of adjunct faculty.

7. Foster Creativity - Exploratory courses could be interdisciplinary courses such as the recently initiated WSU courses. Exploratory courses would meet Gen Ed requirements allowing students to take additional content courses in areas of interest. Exploratory courses could also be recruiting courses for majors that might not need to meet the usual Gen Ed requirements for other content GE courses.

8. In some majors, the reduction in Gen Ed might allow more content and methodology courses making for a more robust educational experience and increase the marketability of the graduates. Any replacement of GE hours by major content courses would need to fit into the 120 hr. requirement. In some degree programs, this could allow students some flexibility to taking courses that enhance their university experience even if they are not GE courses.

9. Allow increased development of new majors, programs, and emphases in majors for the same reason as listed in #5.

10. Enhance the opportunity for students to transfer to WSU by placing the Gen Ed requirements either in line with other state universities (USU) or relieving transfer conflicts. This is also important for students transferring from WSU to other state institutions.

11. Recruitment – This reduction in Gen Ed allows a faster path to a degree, decreased transfer hassles, etc. For recruitment, it could be a selling point in providing students a more efficient path to their degree while retaining the Gen ED component that makes for a well-educated graduate. It could ease some of the total credit hour burden for students that must take an extensive remedial course path.

12. Encourage development of new models to assist students in becoming competent with specific tasks previously associated with Gen Ed courses (example - Computer Lab and targeted courses or competencies).

13. Simplify Gen Ed requirements and advising for students. Perhaps allow more focus on interdisciplinary courses.

Issues and Concerns to a Gen Ed Reduction

1. It would reduce the overall education of WSU graduates.

Comparison of General Education requirements (credit hours) among all state institutions. (Table 7) Will a 6 hour reduction in content (and the addition of an exploratory course) have any advantage in overall education, especially if interdisciplinary content courses can be developed? What are the GE courses students are currently taking? (Table 3 and 6) Why are they taking these courses? What does a GE educated person look like at WSU? (Table 4)

2. Loss of recruiting majors in some majors due to a reduction in the number of students taking their general education courses as a method of exploring that discipline as a possible major. Is there a correlation between overall number of Gen Ed SCHs (particularly in departments) and students who then become majors? When does this happen? Freshman year, after taking the Gen Ed course? When and how many change majors after taking a Gen Ed course?

List top courses that fulfill Gen Ed and where they are located (dept.) either by the top 10 or courses that 90% of students utilize (Table 4).

3. What impact will this have fulltime tenure track faculty?

How many Gen Ed courses are taught by FT faculty vs. adjunct faculty? (Table 2)

What is the percent of SCHs for each category? (Table 2)

Will this impact opportunities for FT faculty to teach overload courses? (Table 5)

What will FT faculty teach if there is a reduction in overall gen Ed courses? Will this make for smaller sections or a reduction in the number of sections?

How many faculty teach overload? (Table 5)

4. SCH funding for departments/colleges. Currently this is not the professed model for funding with other measurements being utilized. These include number of graduates, upper division courses and SCHs, Courses taught as service to WSU including service and prerequisite courses for other programs, historical funding levels, and the ratio of faculty members to majors. Lower division SCHs can be included in historical funding. Academic department funding is decentralized at WSU with budgets generally under the direction of the Dean.

5. Delivery system for courses? What is the comparison for Gen Ed course delivered face-to-face vs. online? (Total courses and SCHs) (Table 6) Where do the most popular Gen Ed courses fit in this comparison?

Other Questions:

1. What type of course can fulfill the extra 3 hours of GE? Role of these exploratory courses? (depth in a specific topic, life skills interdisciplinary topics of interest for retention of new students, etc.), WSU courses

2. Gen Ed outcomes vs. program outcomes especially for introductory courses in each discipline

3. How does each department recruit?

4. What Gen Ed courses are also service courses? Reducing the Gen Ed hours may not have much affect on these courses.

5. Do students take Gen Ed courses for knowledge? Exploration? Convenience? Grade? As a service course? As a prerequisite?

6. What impact will this have on scientific literacy? How is this best addressed?

Table 1. Proposed General Education Requirements (Most efficient route).

English	6	
Math	4	
AI	3	
IL (Part D)	1	
<u>DV</u>	<u>(3)</u>	Total – 14-17
CA	3	
HU	3	
SS	3	
PS	3	
LS	3	
<u>Exp</u>	<u>3</u>	Total – 18
Overall Total – 32-35		

Table 2. Percent of GE courses taught by Adjunct Faculty in each Content Area for Fall, 2015.

Content Area	Percent of Courses	Percent of SCHs
Creative Arts	76%	72%
Humanities	42%	44%
Life Sciences	42%	28%
Physical Sciences	46%	40%
Social Science	40%	34%
Average	49%	44%

Table 3. Top four GE courses based on enrollments in all Gen Ed for Spring 2015 and Fall 2015. (assuming not every course is taught every semester, but most are taught either spring or fall).

GE Area	Course	Count
PS	Geography 1000	837
PS	GeoSci 1030	784
PS	Chem 1010	766
PS	Phys 1010	666
LS	Nutr 1020	1490
LS	Micro 1113	784
LS	Botany 1403	672
LS	Zool	395
SS	Psych 1010	2195
SS	Soc 1010	906
SS	Hlth 1030	874
SS	CJ 1010	848
HU	Comm 1020	1190
HU	Comm 2110	1125
HU	Phil 1000	707
HU	Anthro 1040	241
CA	Art 1010	1229
CA	Music 1010	763
CA	Art 1030	417
CA	Music 1040	265

Table 4 . Percent of GE by Content Area for Spring, 2015

Social Science				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
30	3 (10%)	37%	Psy 1010, Soc 1010, Hlth 1030	
	5 (17%)	53%	CJ 1010, CHF 1500	
	8 (27%)	70%		
Creative Arts				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
19	1 (5%)	26%	Art 1010	
	3 (16%)	51%	Music 1010, Art 1030	
Humanities				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
20	2 (10%)	50%	Comm 1020, Comm 2110	
	3 (15%)	65%	Phil 1000	
Physical Sci				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
18	2 (11%)	30%	Geog 1000, Geosci 1030	
18	4 (22%)	55%	Chem 1010, Phy 1010	
Life Science				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
15	1 (7%)	30%	Nutr 1020	
	3 (20%)	60%	Micro 1113, Bot 1403	
Total GE				
Total Courses	Courses	Percent SCHs	Courses	
120	4 (2%)	20%		
	20 (17%)	60%		
	52 (43%)	90%		

Table 5. Faculty Overload Taught During Fall and Spring Semesters

	<u>FY16</u>	<u>FY15</u>	<u>FY14</u>	<u>FY13</u>	<u>FY12</u>
Number of Faculty Teaching Overload	239	259	255	243	250
Average Credit Hours Taught Per Semester	3.79	3.93	3.98	4.25	3.74

Table 6. Comparison of FTF and Online (including Other) Delivery of GE courses in each Content Area for Fall, 2015.

Content Area	Courses FtF	SCHs FtF	Courses Online	SCHs Online
Creative Arts	75%	70%	25%	30%
Humanities	79%	83%	21%	17%
Life Sciences	67%	64%	33%	36%
Physical Sciences	78%	75%	22%	25%
Social Science	78%	76%	22%	24%

Table 7. Top Three Gen Ed Course Enrollments by Breadth Area 2014 Grads		
Area	Course	Enrollments
CA	Art 1010	1299
CA	Mus 1010	952
CA	Thea 1023	719
HUM	Comm 2110	1625
HUM	Comm 1020	1204
HUM	Phil 1000	494
LS	Nutr 1020	2009
LS	Micr 1113	1247
LS	Btny 1403	759
PS	Geog 1000	922
PS	Chem 1010	739
PS	Phys 1010	719
SS	Psy 1010	1872
SS	CHF 1500	878
SS	Hlth 1030	868

Table 8. Comparison of Gen Ed among State Institutions

	WSU		U of U		USU		UVU		SUU		Dixie St.		SLCC	
	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses	# Credits	# Courses
Composition	6	2	6	2	6	2	6	2	6	2	3	1	6	2
AI	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3-6	1	3	1
QL	3	1	6-9	2	3-4	1	3-4	1	3-4	1	3-5	1	3-4	1
C & IL	2-4	4							4	2	0-7	2		
Diversity	DD										0-6 (DD)	2	DD	
Miscellaneous							5	1-2			0-1 (lab)	1	4	2
Exploration Req.					3-4	1					3-5	1	3	1
Humanities	9	3	6	2	3	1	3-4	1	3-4	1	3	1	3	1
Creative Arts			6	2	3	1	3-4	1	3	1	3	1	3-4	1
Social Science	6	2	6	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1
Physical Science	9	3	6	2	3-4	1	9	3	4-5	1	3-5	1	3	1
Life Science					3-4	1			3-4	1	3-5	1	3-4	1
TOTAL	40		39-42		30-34		35-38		32-36		27-44		34-37	